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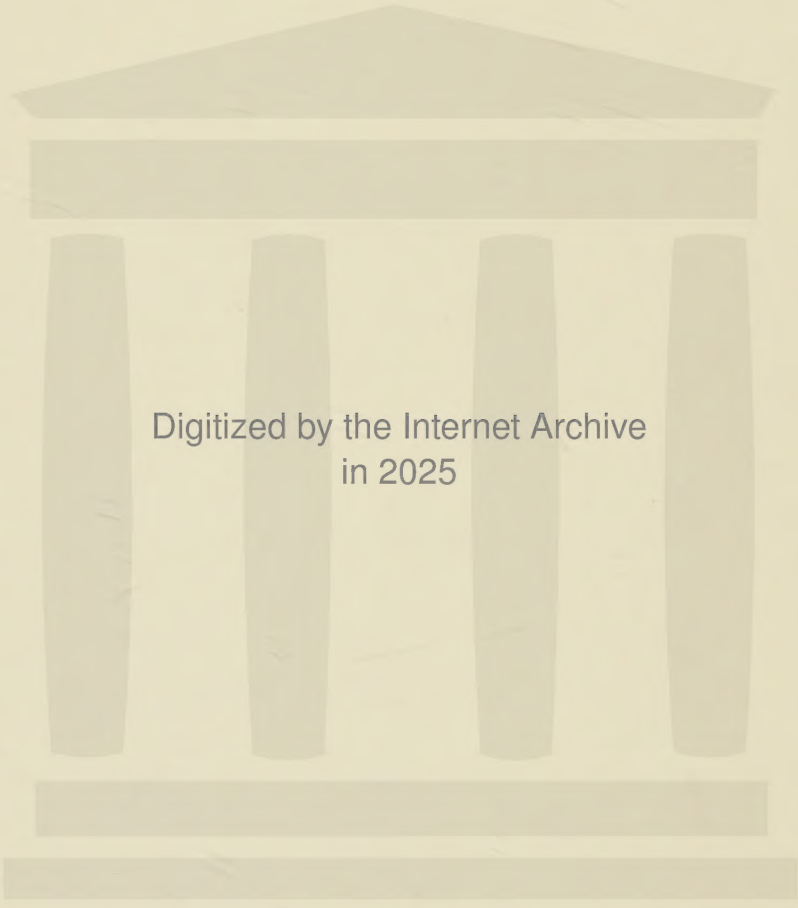
CLASSIFICATION
AND
SUBJECT INDEX
FOR A
LIBRARY.



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DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION

CENTENNIAL 1876–1976

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A

CLASSIFICATION

AND

SUBJECT INDEX

FOR

CATALOGUING AND ARRANGING

THE

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

OF A

LIBRARY.

Z
696
D51
1976
Library
Science

AMHERST, MASS.
1876.

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Melvil Dewey.

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PREFACE.

The plan of the following Classification and Index was developed early in 1873. It was the result of several months' study of library economy as found in some hundreds of books and pamphlets, and in over fifty personal visits to various American libraries. In this study, the author became convinced that the usefulness of these libraries might be greatly increased without additional expenditure. Three years practical use of the system here explained, leads him to believe that it will accomplish this result; for with its aid, the catalogues, shelf lists, indexes, and cross-references essential to this increased usefulness, can be made more economically than by any other method which he has been able to find. The system was devised for cataloguing and indexing purposes, but it was found on trial to be equally valuable for numbering and arranging books and pamphlets on the shelves.

The library is first divided into nine special libraries which are called Classes. These Classes are Philosophy, Theology, &c., and are numbered with the nine digits. Thus Class 9 is the Library of History; Class 7, the Library of Fine Art; Class 2, the Library of Theology. These special libraries or Classes are then considered independently, and each one is separated again into nine special Divisions of the main subject. These Divisions are numbered from 1 to 9 as were the Classes. Thus 59 is the 9th Division (Zoology) of the 5th Class (Natural Science). A final division is then made by separating each of these Divisions into nine Sections which are numbered in the same way, with the nine digits. Thus 513 is the 3d Section (Geometry) of the 1st Division (Mathematics) of the 5th Class (Natural Science). This number, giving Class, Division, and Section, is called the Classification or Class Number, and is applied to every book or pamphlet belonging to the library. All the Geometries are thus numbered 513, all the Mineralogies 549, and so throughout the library, all the books on any given subject bear the number of that subject in the scheme. Where a 0 occurs in a class number, it has its normal zero power. Thus, a book numbered 510, is Class 5, Division 1, but *no* Section. This signifies that the book treats of the Division 51 (Mathematics) in general, and is not limited to any one Section, as is the Geometry, marked 513. If marked 500, it would indicate a treatise on Science in general, limited to *no* Division. A zero occurring in the first place would in the same way show that the book is limited to *no* Class. The classification is mainly made

by subjects or content regardless of *form;* but it is found practically useful to make an additional distinction in these general treatises, according to the form of treatment adopted. Thus, in Science we have a large number of books treating of Science in general, and so having a 0 for the Division number. These books are then divided into Sections, as are those of the other Classes according to the form they have taken on. We have the Philosophy and History of Science, Scientific Compends, Dictionaries, Essays, Periodicals, Societies, Education, and Travels,—all having the common subject, NATURAL SCIENCE, but treating it in these varied forms. These form distinctions are introduced here because the number of general works is large, and the numerals allow of this division, without extra labor for the numbers from 501 to 509 would otherwise be unused. They apply *only* to the general treatises, which, without them, would have a class number ending with two zeros. A Dictionary of Mathematics is 510, not 503, for every book is assigned to the *most specific head that will contain it*, so that 503 is limited to Dictionaries or Cyclopedias of Science *in general.* In the same way a General Cyclopedia or Periodical treats of no one class, and so is assigned to the Class 0. These books treating of no special class, but general in their character, are divided into Cyclopedias, Periodicals, etc. No difficulty is found in following the arithmetical law and omitting the initial zero, so these numbers are printed 31, 32, etc., instead of 031, 032, etc.

The selection and arrangement of the thousand headings of the classification cannot be explained in detail for want of space. In all the work, philosophical theory and accuracy have been made to yield to practical usefulness. The impossibility of making a satisfactory classification of all knowledge as preserved in books, has been appreciated from the first, and nothing of the kind attempted. Theoretical harmony and exactness has been repeatedly sacrificed to the practical requirements of the library or to the convenience of the department in the college. As in every scheme, many minor subjects have been put under general heads to which they do not strictly belong. In some cases these headings have been printed in a distinctive type, e. g., 429 Anglo-Saxon, under ENGLISH PHILOLOGY. The rule has been to assign these subjects to the most nearly allied heads, or where it was thought they would be most useful. The only alternative was to omit them altogether. If any such omission occurs, it is unintentional and will be supplied as soon as discovered. Wherever practicable the heads have been so arranged that each subject is preceded and followed by the most nearly allied subjects and thus the greatest convenience is secured both in the catalogues and on the shelves. Theoretically, the division of every subject into just nine heads is absurd. Practically, it is desirable that the classification be as minute as possible without the use of additional figures, and the decimal principle on which our scheme hinges allows nine divisions as readily as a less number. This principle has proved wholly satisfactory in practice though it appears to destroy proper co-ordination in some places. It has seemed best in our library to use uniformly three figures in the class number. This enables us

to classify certain subjects very minutely, giving, for example, an entire section to Chess. But the History of England has only one section, as our scheme is developed, and thus the two might be said to be co-ordinated. The apparent difficulty in such cases is entirely obviated by the use of a fourth figure, giving nine sub-sections to any subject of sufficient importance to warrant closer classification. In history where the classification is made wholly by countries, a fourth figure is added to give a division into *periods*. As the addition of each figure gives a ten-fold division, any desired degree of minuteness may be secured in the classing of special subjects. The apparent lack of co-ordination arises from the fact that only the first three figures of these more important heads are as yet printed, the fourth figure and the sub-sections being supplied on the catalogues in manuscript. Should the growth of any of these sub-sections warrant it, a fifth figure will be added, for the scheme admits of expansion without limit.

The arrangement of headings has been sometimes modified to secure a mnemonic aid in numbering and finding books without the Index. For instance, the scheme is so arranged that China has always the number 1. In Ancient History, it has the first section, 931: in Modern History, under Asia, it has 951: in Philology, the Chinese language appears as 491. After the same manner the Indian number is 2; Egyptian, 4; English, 2; German, 3; French, 4; Italian, 5; Spanish, 6; European, 4; Asian, 5; African, 6; North American, 7; South American, 8; and so for all the divisions by languages or countries. The Italian 5, for instance, will be noticed in 35, 55, 450, 755, 850, and 945. This mnemonic principle is specially prominent in Philology and Literature and their divisions, and in the *form* distinctions used in the first 9 sections of each class. Materials, Methods, or Theory occurring anywhere as a head, bears always the number 1. Dictionaries and Cyclopedias, 3; Essays, 4; Periodicals, 5; Associations, Institutions, and Societies, 6; Education, 7; Collections, 9. In the numerous cases where several minor heads have been grouped together under the head Other, it always bears the number 9. Wherever practicable, this principle is carried out in sub-dividing the sections. For instance, the Geology of North America, which bears the number 557 is sub-divided by adding the *sections* of 970 (History of North America). The Geology of Mexico then bears the number 5578: mnemonically, the first 5 is the Science number; the second 5, Geology; the 7, North America; and the 8, Mexico. Any library attendant or reader after using the scheme a short time will recognize at a glance, any catalogue or ledger entry, book or pamphlet, marked 5578 as something on the Geology of Mexico. Users of the scheme will notice this mnemonic principle in several hundred places in the classification, and will find it of great practical utility in numbering and finding books without the aid of Catalogue or Index, and in determining the character of any book simply from its call number as recorded on the book, on all its catalogue and cross reference cards, on the ledger, and in the check box.

In naming the headings, brevity has been secured in many cases at the sacrifice of exactness. It was thought more important to have short, familiar titles

for the headings than that the names given should express with fullness and exactness the character of all books catalogued under them. Many subjects, apparently omitted, will be found in the Index, assigned, with allied subjects, to a heading which bears the name of the most important only. Reference to this Subject Index will decide at once any doubtful points.

In arranging books in the classification, as in filling out the scheme, practical usefulness has been esteemed the most important thing. The effort has been to put each book under the subject to the student of which it would be most useful. The content or the real subject of which a book treats, and not the form or the accidental wording of the title, determines its place. Following this rule, a Philosophy of Art is put with Art, not with Philosophy; a History of Mathematics, with Mathematics, not with History; for the philosophy and history are simply the *form* which these books have taken. The true content or subject is Art, and Mathematics, and to the student of these subjects they are most useful. The predominant tendency or obvious purpose of the book usually decides its class number at once; still many books treat of two or more different subjects, and in such cases it is assigned to the place where it will be most useful, and underneath the class number are written the numbers of any other subjects on which it also treats. These *Cross References* are given both on the plate and the subject card as well as on the cross reference card. If a book treats of a majority of the sections of any division, it is given the Division number instead of the most important Section number with cross references.

Collected works, libraries, etc., are either kept together and assigned like individual books to the most specific head that will contain them; or assigned to the most prominent of the various subjects on which they treat with cross references from the others; or are separated and the parts classed as independent works. Translations are classed with their originals.

The Alphabetical Subject Index is designed to guide, both in numbering and in finding the books. In numbering, the most specific head that will contain the book having been determined, reference to that head in the Index will give the class number to which it should be assigned. In finding books on any given subject, reference to the Index will give the number under which they are to be sought on the shelves, in the Shelf Catalogue, or in the Subject Catalogue. The Index gives after each subject the number of the class to which it is assigned. Most names of countries, towns, animals, plants, minerals, diseases, &c., have been omitted, the aim being to furnish an Index of Subjects on which books are written, and not a Gazetteer or a Dictionary of all the nouns in the language. Such subjects will be found as special chapters or sections of books on the subjects given in the Index. The names of individual subjects of biographies will be found in the Class List of Biography. Omissions of any of the more general subjects will be supplied when brought to notice.

In arranging the books on the shelves, the absolute location by shelf and book number is wholly abandoned, the relative location by class and book number

being one of the most valuable features of the plan. The class number serves also as the location number and the shelf number in common use is entirely dispensed with. Accompanying the class number is the *book* number, which prevents confusion of different books on the same subject. Thus the first Geometry catalogued is marked 513·1 ; the second 513·2, and so on to any extent, the last number showing how many books the library has on that subject. The books of each section are all together, and arranged by book numbers, and these sections are also arranged in simple numerical order throughout the library. The call number 513·11 signifies not the 11th book on shelf 513; or alcove 5, range 1, shelf 3, as in most libraries, but signifies the 11th book in subject 513 or the 11th Geometry belonging to the library. In finding the book, the printed numbers on the backs are followed, the upper being the class and the lower the book number. The class is found in its numerical order among the classes as the shelf is found in the ordinary system : the book in its numerical order in the class. The shelves are not numbered, as the increase of different departments, the opening of new rooms, and any arrangement of classes to bring the books most circulated nearest to the delivery desk, will bring different class numbers on a given shelf. New books as received are numbered and put into place, in the same way that new titles are added to the card catalogue.

The single digit occasionally prefixed to the book number, e. g. the 3 in 421·3·7 is the nearest height in decimeters of books too large to be put on the regular library shelves, which are only $2\frac{1}{2}$ decimeters apart. The great mass of the library consists of 2-decimeter books, the size numbers of which are omitted. Books from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ decimeters in height have 3 prefixed to the book number, and are found on the bottom shelf of each range. The larger sizes are prefixed with 4, 5, &c., and are found on the special shelves provided, in order to avoid the great waste of space otherwise occasioned by the relative location. By this use of the size numbers a close economy of space is secured.

Thus all the books on any given subject are found standing together, and no additions or changes ever separate them. Not only are all the books on the subject sought, found together, but the most nearly allied subjects precede and follow, they in turn being preceded and followed by other allied subjects as far as practicable. Readers not having access to the shelves find the short titles arranged in the same order on the Shelf Catalogue, and the full titles, imprints, cross references, notes, &c., on the Subject Catalogue. The uncatalogued pamphlets treating of any subject bear the same class number and are arranged on the shelves immediately after the books of each section.

In both the Authors' Catalogue and the Subject Index, brevity has been studied because of the economy, but more because of the much greater ease of reference to a short title catalogue. The custom of giving full titles, etc., under authors, and only references or very brief titles under subjects, has been reversed. A reader seeking a book of a *known author*, in the vast majority of cases, wants simply the number by which to call for it, and can find it much sooner in a brief

title catalogue. In the rare cases where more is needed the class number refers instantly to all these facts on the cards. On the other hand, a reader seeking books on a *known subject*, needs the full title, imprint, cross-references, and notes, to enable him to choose the book best suited to his wants.

The Subject Catalogue is a full title Shelf List on cards and is for the use of the public. The Shelf List is a short title Subject Catalogue in book form, made of separate sheets laced into an Emerson binder, and is for official use. We thus have without extra labor, both full and short title Subject Catalogues and Shelf Lists. The public Authors' Catalogue is a printed volume ; the official Authors' Catalogue or Index is on cards. As a result each of the public Catalogues is checked by an official Catalogue; each of the card Catalogues by a book Catalogue; each of the brief title catalogues by a full title catalogue—an advantage that will be appreciated by all librarians desiring accuracy of administration and catalogues.

The Arabic numerals can be written and found more quickly, and with less danger of confusion or mistake, than any other symbols whatever. Therefore the Roman numerals, capitals and small letters, and similar symbols usually found in systems of classification are entirely discarded and by the exclusive use of Arabic numerals in their regular order throughout the shelves, classifications, indexes, catalogues and records, there is secured the greatest accuracy, economy, and convenience. This advantage is specially prominent in comparison with systems where the name of the author or the title must be written in calling for or charging books and in making references.

Throughout the catalogues the number of a book shows not only *where* it is but *what* it is. On the library accounts the character of each person's reading is clearly indicated by the numbers charged, and the minutest statistics of circulation in any subject are made by simply counting the call slips in the check box, and recording the number against the class number in the record.

By the use of size numbers the greatest possible economy of space may be secured, for the size distinction may be made for every inch or even less if desired, and this without additional labor, as it will be seen that the size figure, when introduced, requires one less figure in the book number, and so does not increase the number of digits as would at first appear.

Parts of sets, and books on the same or allied subjects, are never separated as they are sure to be, sooner or later, in every library arranged on the common plan, unless it be frequently re-arranged and re-catalogued. The great expense of this re-cataloguing makes it impracticable except for a few very wealthy libraries. In this system the catalogue and book numbers remain unchanged through all changes of shelving, buildings, or arrangement. In addition to its own peculiar merits, this plan has all the advantages of the card catalogue principle and of the relative location, which have been used and very strongly approved by prominent libraries.

As in the card catalogue system, there is room for indefinite expansion without

devices or provisions. Space is the only requisite and if the shelf room is exhausted, the floor space is equally good, except for the inconvenience of stooping.

Some prominent opponents of classed catalogues have admitted that the Subject Index, in deciding where to class a book at first, and where to look for it ever afterwards, has removed their strongest objections. Certainly it would be impossible to make an Index more cheaply or more easy of reference, it being a single alphabet, of single words, followed by single numbers.

These class numbers applied to pamphlets have proved specially satisfactory. The number is written on the upper left corner and the pamphlets are arranged either in pamphlet cases with the books on the same subject or on special shelves divided every decimeter by perpendicular sections. As each pamphlet is examined when received into the library, it is the work of a single moment to pencil on it its class number. There is no expense whatever incurred, and yet the entire pamphlet resources of the library on any subject can be produced almost instantly. The immense advantages of this plan over those in common use, both in economy and usefulness, will be appreciated by every librarian caring for a pamphlet collection. A catalogue of authors may be made on slips if desired. The pamphlets themselves are the best Subject Catalogue.

Though designed wholly for library use, the plan has proved of great service in preserving newspaper clippings in large envelopes arranged by class numbers; and more especially in taking the place of the common note-book and Index Rerum. Slips of uniform size are used with the class number of the subject written on the corner. Minute alphabetical headings are used under each class number, the slips being arranged in numerical order like the Subject Card Catalogue. Clippings and notes arranged in this way are at all times their own complete index, and have the same advantages over the common scrap and note-books that the Subject Catalogue has over the Accessions Book, in looking up the resources of the library on any given subject. Those who have tried this method are so enthusiastic in its praise that it seemed worthy of mention in this place.

The plan was adopted in the Amherst College Library in 1873, and the work of transferring the entire library to the new catalogue at once commenced. It was found entirely practicable to make the change gradually, as means allowed, without interfering in any appreciable degree with the circulation of the books. The three years trial to which it has been there subjected has more than justified the claims of its friends, and it is now printed with the more confidence on this account. It has been kept in manuscript up to this time, in order that the many minor details might be subjected to actual trial and modified where improvement was possible. The labor involved in preparing the Classification and Index has been wholly beyond the appreciation of any who have never attempted a similar task. Much valuable aid has been rendered by specialists in many departments, and nearly every member of the Faculty has given advice from time to time. Among the many to whom thanks are due, special mention should be made of

Mr. C. A. Cutter, the librarian of the Boston Athenæum, and Mr. John Fiske, of the Harvard University library, for valuable suggestions and appreciative criticism. While these friends are in no way responsible for any remaining imperfections in the scheme, they should have credit for many improvements which have been made during these three years of revision. The essential character of the plan has remained unchanged from the first. Doubtless other improvements are still possible, and it is hoped that users of the scheme will call attention to any proposed change in the naming or arrangement of the headings, or to any omission which should be supplied in the Subject Index.

Before printing, the plan was submitted to quite a number of librarians for criticism. Among the hundreds of points raised as to its practical workings and usefulness there was only one in which it was not shown to be equal or superior to any other system known. This objection applied only to the arrangement on the shelves; not at all to the catalogues or indexes. It was, that in this relative location, a book which this year stands, e. g., at the end of a certain shelf, may not be on that shelf at all another year, because of the uneven growth of the parts of the library. This slight objection inheres in any system where the books are arranged by *subjects* rather than by windows, doors, shelves, and similar non-intellectual distinctions.

In this hurriedly prepared account of his plan, the author has doubtless failed to meet many objections which may be raised and which he could easily answer. He would therefore ask the privilege of replying personally to any such objections, where they arise, believing that it will be possible to answer, if not all, at least a very large proportion.

In his varied reading, correspondence, and conversation on the subject, the author doubtless received suggestions and gained ideas which it is now impossible for him to acknowledge. Perhaps the most fruitful source of ideas was the *Nuovo Sistema di Catalogo Bibliografico Generale* of Natale Battezzati, of Milan. Certainly he is indebted to this system adopted by the Italian publishers in 1871, though he has copied nothing from it. The plan of the St. Louis Public School Library, and that of the Apprentices' Library of New York, which in some respects resemble his own, were not seen till all the essential features were decided upon, though not given to the public. In filling the nine classes of the scheme the inverted Baconian arrangement of the St. Louis Library has been followed. The author has no desire to claim original invention for any part of his system where another has been before him, and would most gladly make specific acknowledgment of every aid and suggestion were it in his power to do so. With these general explanations and acknowledgments he submits the scheme, hoping it may prove as useful to others as it has to himself.

Amherst College Library,
June 10th, 1876.

Those interested will find fuller explanations and remarks in the Library volume now being printed by the Bureau of Education at Washington.

PHILOSOPHY,

THEOLOGY,

SOCIOLOGY,

PHILOLOGY,

NATURAL SCIENCE,

USEFUL ARTS,

FINE ARTS,

LITERATURE,

HISTORY.

DIVISIONS.

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10	Bibliography.
20	Book Rarities.
30	General Cyclopedias.
40	Polygraphy.
50	General Periodicals.
60	General Societies.
70	
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100	**Philosophy.**
110	Metaphysics.
120	
130	Anthropology.
140	Schools of Psychology.
150	Mental Faculties.
160	Logic.
170	Ethics.
180	Ancient Philosophies.
190	Modern Philosophies.
200	**Theology.**
210	Natural Theology.
220	Bible.
230	Doctrinal Theology.
240	Practical and Devotional.
250	Homiletical and Pastoral.
260	Institutions and Missions.
270	Ecclesiastical History.
280	Christian Sects.
290	Non-christian Religions.
300	**Sociology.**
310	Statistics.
320	Political Science.
330	Political Economy.
340	Law.
350	Administration.
360	Associations and Institutions.
370	Education.
380	Commerce and Communication.
390	Customs and Costumes.
400	**Philology.**
410	Comparative.
420	English.
430	German.
440	French.
450	Italian.
460	Spanish.
470	Latin.
480	Greek.
490	Other Languages.
500	**Natural Science.**
510	Mathematics.
520	Astronomy.
530	Physics.
540	Chemistry.
550	Geology.
560	Paleontology.
570	Biology.
580	Botany.
590	Zoology.
600	**Useful Arts.**
610	Medicine.
620	Engineering.
630	Agriculture.
640	Domestic Economy.
650	Communication and Commerce.
660	Chemical Technology.
670	Manufactures.
680	Mechanic Trades.
690	Building.
700	**Fine Arts.**
710	Landscape Gardening.
720	Architecture.
730	Sculpture.
740	Drawing and Design.
750	Painting.
760	Engraving.
770	Photography.
780	Music.
790	Amusements.
800	**Literature.**
810	Treatises and Collections.
820	English.
830	German.
840	French.
850	Italian.
860	Spanish.
870	Latin.
880	Greek.
890	Other Languages.
900	**History.**
910	Geography and Description.
920	Biography.
930	Ancient History.
940	Modern. Europe.
950	Asia.
960	Africa.
970	North America.
980	South America.
990	Oceanica and Polar Regions.

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10 Bibliography.
11 General Bibliographies.
12 Special Forms.
13 *Manuscripts.*
14 *Anonyms, Pseudonyms, &c.*
15 Special Countries.
16 " Subjects.
17 Subject Catalogues.
18 Authors' "
19 Library Economy and Reports.

20 Book Rarities.
21 Manuscripts.
22 Block Books.
23 Early Printed.
24 Celebrated Printers.
25 " Binders.
26 Materials.
27 Ownership.
28 Prohibited.
29 Other.

30 General Cyclopedias.
31 American.
32 English.
33 German.
34 French.
35 Italian.
36 Spanish.
37 Slavic.
38 Scandinavian.
39 Other.

40 Polygraphy.
41 American.
42 English.
43 German.
44 French.
45 Italian.
46 Spanish.
47 Slavic.
48 Scandinavian.
49 Other.

50 General Periodicals.
51 American.
52 English.
53 German.
54 French.
55 Italian.
56 Spanish.
57 Slavic.
58 Scandinavian.
59 Other.

60 General Societies.
61 American.
62 English.
63 German.
64 French.
65 Italian.
66 Spanish.
67 Slavic.
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PHILOSOPHY.

100 Philosophy.
101
102 Compends.
103 Dictionaries.
104 Essays.
105 Periodicals.
106 Societies.
107 Education.
108
109 History.

110 Metaphysics.
111 Ontology.
112 Methodology.
113 Cosmology.
114
115
116
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130 Anthropology.
131 Mental physiology and hygiene.
132 Mental derangements.
133 Delusions, witchcraft, magic.
134 Mesmerism.
135 Sleep, dreams, somnambulism.
136 Sexes.
137 Temperaments.
138 Physiognomy.
139 Phrenology.

140 Schools of Psychology.
141 Idealistic.
142 Critical.
143 Intuitive.
144 Empirical.
145 Sensational.
146 Materialistic.
147 Pantheistic.
148 Eclectic.
149 Other.

150 Mental Faculties.
151 Intellect.
152 Sense.
153 Understanding.
154 Memory.
155 Reason.
156 Imagination.
157 Susceptibility.
158 Instincts.
159 Will.

160 Logic.
161 Inductive.
162 Deductive.
163 Assent.
164
165
166
167
168
169

170 Ethics.
171 Theoretical.
172 State.
173 Family.
174 Business.
175 Amusements.
176 Sexual.
177 Social.
178 Temperance.
179 Other.

180 Ancient Philosophies.
181 Oriental.
182 Early Greek.
183 Sophistic and Socratic.
184 Platonic.
185 Aristotelian.
186 Pyrrhonist and New Platonist.
187 Epicurean.
188 Stoic.
189 Patristic.

190 Modern Philosophies.
191 Scotch and American.
192 English.
193 German.
194 French.
195 Italian.
196 Spanish.
197 Arabian.
198 Scholastic.
199 Other.

THEOLOGY.

200 Theology.
201 Philosophy.
202 Compends.
203 Dictionaries.
204 Essays.
205 Periodicals.
206 Societies.
207 Education.
208
209 History.

210 Natural Theology.
211 Theism and Atheism.
212 Pantheism.
213 Creation.
214 Providence.
215 Religion and science.
216 Evil.
217 Prayer.
218 Future Life.
219

220 Bible.
221 Old Testament.
222 *Historical books.*
223 *Poetical* "
224 *Prophetical* "
225 New Testament.
226 *Gospels and Acts.*
227 *Epistles.*
228 *Apocalypse.*
229 Apocrypha.

230 Doctrinal.
231 God.
232 Christ.
233 Man.
234 Salvation.
235 Angels.
236 Death and resurrection.
237 Future state.
238 Inspiration.
239 Apologetics.

240 Practical and Devotional.
241 Didactic.
242 Meditative.
243 Hortatory.
244 Ritual.
245 Hymnology.
246 Public worship.
247 Social "
248 Private "
249 Religious fiction and anecdote.

250 Homiletical and Pastoral.
251 Homiletics.
252 Sermons.
253 *Doctrinal.*
254 *Practical.*
255 *Religion and Science.*
256 *Political.*
257 *Ordination.*
258 *Expository.*
259 *Commemorative.*

260 Institutions and Missions.
261 Church.
262 *Ecclesiastical polity.*
263 Sabbath.
264 Baptism.
265 Lord's Supper.
266 Missions.
267 *Foreign.*
268 Sunday schools.
269 Revivals.

270 Ecclesiastical History.
271 Religious orders.
272 Persecutions.
273 Doctrines.
274 Europe.
275 Asia.
276 Africa.
277 North America.
278 South America.
279 Oceanica.

280 Christian Sects.
281 Oriental.
282 Roman Catholic.
283 English and Protestant Episcopal.
284 Presbyterian.
285 Congregational.
286 Baptist.
287 Methodist.
288 Unitarian and Universalist.
289 Other Christian sects.

290 Non-Christian Religions.
291 Comparative mythology.
292 Greek and Roman mythology.
293 Norse mythology.
294 Brahmanism and Buddhism.
295 Parseeism.
296 Judaism.
297 Mohammedanism.
298 Mormonism.
299 Other.

SOCIOLOGY.

300 Sociology.
301 Philosophy.
302 Compends.
303 Dictionaries.
304 Essays.
305 Periodicals.
306 Societies.
307
308
309 History.

310 Statistics.
311 Methods.
312 Progress of population.
313 Progress of civilization.
314 Europe.
315 Asia.
316 Africa.
317 North America.
318 South America.
319 Oceanica.

320 Political Science.
321 Patriarchal Institutions.
322 Feudal "
323 Monarchic "
324 Republican "
325 Colonies and Emigration.
326 Slavery.
327 Foreign and Domestic relations.
328 Legislative annals.
329 Political essays and speeches.

330 Political Economy.
331 Capital and labor.
332 Banks and money.
333 Stocks, rents, and income.
334 Credit and interest.
335 Communism.
336 Public funds and taxation.
337 Protection and free trade.
338 Production.
339 Pauperism.

340 Law.
341 International.
342 Constitutional and administrative.
343 Statute and common.
344 Equity.
345 Criminal.
346 Maritime.
347 Martial.
348 Civil and Canon.
349 Evidence and Forms of practice.

350 Administration.
351 Civil Service.
352 *Treasury.*
353 *Interior.*
354 *Police.*
355 Army.
356 *Infantry.*
357 *Cavalry.*
358 *Artillery.*
359 Navy.

360 Associations and Institutions.
361 Charitable.
362 Religious.
363 Political.
364 Reformatory and Sanitary.
365 Prisons.
366 Secret Societies.
367 Trades Unions.
368 Insurance.
369 Other.

370 Education.
371 Teachers, methods, and discipline.
372 Elementary.
373 Higher.
374 Self-education.
375 Classical and real.
376 Female.
377 Religious and secular.
378 Schools and Colleges.
379 Reports.

380 Commerce, Communication.
381 Domestic trade.
382 Foreign trade.
383 Post office.
384 Telegraph.
385 Railroad and express.
386 Canal transportation.
387 River and ocean transportation.
388 City transit.
389 Weights and measures.

390 Customs and Costumes.
391 Ancient.
392 Medieval.
393 Modern.
394 *Europe.*
395 *Asia.*
396 *Africa.*
397 *North America.*
398 *South America.*
399 *Oceanica.*

PHILOLOGY.

400 Philology.
401 Philosophy.
402 Compends.
403 Dictionaries.
404 Essays.
405 Periodicals.
406 Societies.
407 Education.
408 Universal Language.
409 History.
410 Comparative.
411 Orthography.
412 Etymology.
413 Dictionaries.
414 Phonology.
415 Grammar.
416 Prosody.
417 Inscriptions.
418 Texts.
419 Hieroglyphics.
420 English.
421 Orthography.
422 Etymology.
423 Dictionaries.
424 Synonyms.
425 Grammar.
426 Prosody.
427 Dialects.
428 Texts.
429 Anglo-Saxon.
430 German.
431 Orthography.
432 Etymology.
433 Dictionaries.
434 Synonyms.
435 Grammar.
436 Prosody.
437 Dialects.
438 Texts.
439 Dutch and Low German.
440 French.
441 Orthography.
442 Etymology.
443 Dictionaries.
444 Synonyms.
445 Grammar.
446 Prosody.
447 Dialects.
448 Texts.
449 Old French, Provençal.
450 Italian.
451 Orthography.
452 Etymology.
453 Dictionaries.
454 Synonyms.
455 Grammar.
456 Prosody.
457 Dialects.
458 Texts.
459 Romansh and Wallachian.
460 Spanish.
461 Orthography.
462 Etymology.
463 Dictionaries.
464 Synonyms.
465 Grammar.
466 Prosody.
467 Dialects.
468 Texts.
469 Portuguese.
470 Latin.
471 Orthography.
472 Etymology.
473 Dictionaries.
474 Synonyms.
475 Grammar.
476 Prosody.
477 Dialects.
478 Texts.
479 Medieval Latin.
480 Greek.
481 Orthography.
482 Etymology.
483 Dictionaries.
484 Synonyms.
485 Grammar.
486 Prosody.
487 Dialects.
488 Texts.
489 Modern Greek.
490 Other Languages.
491 Chinese.
492 Egyptian.
493 Semitic.
494 Indian.
495 Iranian.
496 Keltic.
497 Slavic.
498 Scandinavian.
499 Other.

NATURAL SCIENCE.

500 Natural Science.
501 Philosophy.
502 Compends.
503 Dictionaries.
504 Essays.
505 Periodicals.
506 Societies.
507 Education.
508 Travels.
509 History.

510 Mathematics.
511 Arithmetic.
512 Algebra.
513 Geometry.
514 Trigonometry.
515 Conic sections.
516 Analytical geometry.
517 Calculus.
518 Quaternions.
519 Probabilities.

520 Astronomy.
521 Theoretical.
522 Practical.
523 Descriptive.
524 Maps.
525 Observations.
526 Figure of the earth.
527 Navigation.
528 Almanacs.
529 Chronology.

530 Physics.
531 Mechanics.
532 Hydrostatics.
533 Pneumatics.
534 Acoustics.
535 Optics.
536 Heat.
537 Electricity.
538 Magnetism.
539 Molecular physics.

540 Chemistry.
541 Theoretical.
542 Experimental.
543 Analysis.
544 *Qualitative.*
545 *Quantitative.*
546 Inorganic.
547 Organic.
548 Crystallography.
549 Mineralogy.

550 Geology.
551 Physical Geography, Meteorology.
552 Lithology.
553 Dynamical geology.
554 Europe.
555 Asia.
556 Africa.
557 North America.
558 South America.
559 Oceanica.

560 Palæontology.
561 Plants.
562 Invertebrates.
563 *Protozoa and Radiates.*
564 *Mollusca.*
565 *Articulates.*
566 Vertebrates.
567 *Fishes.*
568 *Reptiles and Birds.*
569 *Mammals.*

570 Biology.
571 Prehistoric Archæology.
572 Ethnology.
573 Natural History of Man.
574 Homologies.
575 Evolution.
576 Embryology.
577 Spontaneous generation.
578 Microscopy.
579 Collectors' Manuals.

580 Botany.
581 Physiological.
582 Systematic.
583 Ornamental.
584 Europe.
585 Asia.
586 Africa.
587 North America.
588 South America.
589 Oceanica.

590 Zoology.
591 Comparative Anatomy.
592 Invertebrates.
593 *Protozoa and Radiates.*
594 *Mollusca.*
595 *Articulates.*
596 Vertebrates.
597 *Fishes.*
598 *Reptiles and Birds.*
599 *Mammals.*

USEFUL ARTS.

600 Useful Arts.
601 Philosophy.
602 Compends.
603 Dictionaries.
604 Essays.
605 Periodicals.
606 Societies.
607 Education.
608 Patents.
609 History.

610 Medicine.
611 Anatomy.
612 Physiology.
613 Hygiene.
614 Public health.
615 Materia medica and therapeutics.
616 Pathology, theory and practice.
617 Surgery and dentistry.
618 Obstetrics and sexual science.
619 Veterinary medicine.

620 Engineering.
621 Mechanical.
622 Topographical.
623 Military.
624 Bridge.
625 Road and railroad.
626 Canal.
627 Harbor.
628 Hydraulic and mining.
629 Instruments and field books.

630 Agriculture.
631 Soil and preparation.
632 Pests and hindrances.
633 Productions of the soil.
634 Fruits.
635 Garden.
636 Domestic animals.
637 Dairy.
638 Bees and silkworm.
639 Fishing, trapping.

640 Domestic Economy.
641 Cookery.
642 Confectionery.
643 Food and dining.
644 Fuel and lights.
645 Furniture.
646 Clothing and toilet.
647 Servants.
648 Laundry.
649 Nursery and sick-room.

650 Communication, Commerce.
651 Writing.
652 *Penmanship.*
653 *Short hand.*
654 Telegraphy.
655 Printing.
656 Navigation and transportation.
657 Book-keeping.
658 Business manuals.
659 Other.

660 Chemical Technology.
661 Chemicals.
662 Pyrotechnics.
663 Wines, liquors, and ales.
664 Sugar, salt, starch, etc.
665 Gas.
666 Glass.
667 Dyeing and bleaching.
668 Assaying.
669 Metallurgy.

670 Manufactures.
671 Metals.
672 *Iron.*
673 Marble, stone, and brick.
674 Wood.
675 Leather and rubber.
676 Paper.
677 Textile fabrics.
678 *Cotton.*
679 Other.

680 Mechanic Trades.
681 Watch and instrument-making.
682 Blacksmithing.
683 Lock and gun-making.
684 Carriage and cabinet-making.
685 Saddlery and shoe-making.
686 Book-binding.
687 Clothes-making.
688
689 Other.

690 Building.
691 Materials.
692 Plans and specifications.
693 Masonry.
694 Carpentry.
695 Slating and tiling.
696 Plumbing.
697 Warming and ventilation.
698 Painting, glazing, and paper-hanging.
699 Car and Ship-building.

FINE ARTS.

700 Fine Arts.
701 Philosophy.
702 Compends.
703 Dictionaries.
704 Essays.
705 Periodicals.
706 Societies.
707 Education.
708 Galleries.
709 History.

710 Landscape Gardening.
711 Parks.
712 Private grounds.
713 Walks and drives.
714 Water.
715 Trees and hedges.
716 Plants and flowers.
717 Arbors.
718 Monuments.
719 Cemeteries.

720 Architecture.
721 Architectural construction.
722 Ancient and Oriental.
723 Medieval.
724 Modern.
725 Public buildings.
726 Church.
727 School.
728 Domestic and rural.
729 Of special countries.

730 Sculpture.
731 Materials and methods.
732 Ancient.
733 *Greek and Roman.*
734 Medieval.
735 Modern.
736 Carving.
737 Numismatics.
738 Pottery and bronzes.
739 Collections.

740 Drawing and Design.
741 Free-hand.
742 Perspective.
743 Art anatomy.
744 Mathematical drawing.
745 Ornamental design.
746 *Ancient.*
747 *Medieval.*
748 *Modern.*
749 Collections.

750 Painting.
751 Materials and methods.
752 Color.
753 Flemish and Dutch Schools.
754 French.
755 Italian.
756 Other schools.
757 Portrait.
758 Landscape.
759 Collections.

760 Engraving.
761 Wood.
762 Steel and Copper.
763 Lithography.
764 Chromolithography.
765 Line and Stipple.
766 Mezzotint and Aquatint.
767 Etching.
768 Bank Note and Machine.
769 Collections.

770 Photography.
771 Materials.
772 Ambrotype and Daguerreotype.
773 Photograph.
774 Heliotype, Albertype, etc.
775 Photolithography.
776 Stereoscopic.
777 Portrait.
778 Landscape.
779 Collections.

780 Music.
781 Theory.
782 Dramatic.
783 Church.
784 Vocal.
785 Instrumental.
786 *Piano and Organ.*
787 *Stringed instruments.*
788 *Wind* "
789 Associations and institutions.

790 Amusements.
791 Entertainments.
792 *Theatre.*
793 In-door amusements.
794 *Chess.*
795 *Other games.*
796 Out-door sports.
797 *Boating and ball.*
798 *Horsemanship and racing.*
799 *Fishing, hunting, shooting.*

LITERATURE.

800	**Literature.**
801	Philosophy.
802	Compends.
803	Dictionaries.
804	Essays.
805	Periodicals.
806	Societies.
807	
808	
809	History.
810	**Treatises and Collections.**
811	Poetry.
812	Drama.
813	Romance.
814	Essays.
815	Rhetoric and oratory.
816	Letters.
817	Satire.
818	Humor.
819	Miscellany.
820	**English Literature.**
821	" Poetry.
822	" Drama.
823	" Romance.
824	" Essays.
825	" Oratory.
826	" Letters.
827	" Satire.
828	" Humor.
829	" Miscellany.
830	**German Literature.**
831	" Poetry.
832	" Drama.
833	" Romance.
834	" Essays.
835	" Oratory.
836	" Letters.
837	" Satire.
838	" Humor.
839	" Miscellany.
840	**French Literature.**
841	" Poetry.
842	" Drama.
843	" Romance.
844	" Essays.
845	" Oratory.
846	" Letters.
847	" Satire.
848	" Humor.
849	" Miscellany.
850	**Italian Literature.**
851	" Poetry.
852	" Drama.
853	" Romance.
854	" Essays.
855	" Oratory.
856	" Letters.
857	" Satire.
858	" Humor.
859	" Miscellany.
860	**Spanish Literature.**
861	" Poetry.
862	" Drama.
863	" Romance.
864	" Essays.
865	" Oratory.
866	" Letters.
867	" Satire.
868	" Humor.
869	" Miscellany.
870	**Latin Literature.**
871	" Poetry.
872	*Dramatic.*
873	*Epic.*
874	*Lyric.*
875	" Oratory.
876	" Letters.
877	" Satire.
878	" Philosophy.
879	" History.
880	**Greek Literature.**
881	" Poetry.
882	*Dramatic.*
883	*Epic.*
884	*Lyric.*
885	" Oratory.
886	" Letters.
887	" Humor.
888	" Philosophy.
889	" History.
890	**Other Languages.**
891	Chinese.
892	Egyptian.
893	Semitic.
894	Indian.
895	Iranian.
896	Keltic.
897	Slavic.
898	Scandinavian.
899	Other.

HISTORY.

900 History.
901 Philosophy.
902 Compends, chronology.
903 Dictionaries.
904 Essays.
905 Periodicals.
906 Societies.
907 Education.
908 Charts.
909 Universal Histories.

910 Geography and Description.
911 Historical.
912 Ancient.
913 Modern.
914 *Europe.*
915 *Asia.*
916 *Africa.*
917 *North America.*
918 *South America.*
919 *Oceanica and Polar Regions.*

920 Biography.
921 Of philosophy.
922 " theology.
923 " sociology.
924 " philology.
925 " science.
926 " useful arts.
927 " fine arts.
928 " literature.
929 Genealogy and Heraldry.

930 Ancient History.
931 Chinese.
932 Egyptian.
933 Jewish.
934 Indian.
935 Persian.
936 Keltic.
937 Roman.
938 Greek.
939 Other.

940 Europe.
941 Scotland and Ireland.
942 England.
943 Germany and Austria.
944 France.
945 Italy.
946 Spain and Portugal.
947 Russia.
948 Scandinavia.
949 Other.

950 Asia.
951 China.
952 Japan.
953 Arabia.
954 India.
955 Persia.
956 Turkey in Asia.
957 Siberia.
958 Afghanistan.
959 Other.

960 Africa.
961 North Africa.
962 *Egypt and Nubia.*
963 *Abyssinia.*
964 *Morocco.*
965 *Algeria.*
966 Central Africa.
967 *Guinea.*
968 South Africa.
969 Other.

970 North America.
971 British America.
972 *Canada.*
973 United States and Territories.
974 *Eastern.*
975 *Middle.*
976 *Southern.*
977 *Western.*
978 Mexico.
979 Other.

980 South America.
981 Brazil.
982 Argentine Republic.
983 Chili.
984 Bolivia.
985 Peru.
986 New Granada.
987 Venezuela.
988 Guiana.
989 Other.

990 Oceanica and Polar Regions.
991 Malaysia.
992 *Sunda.*
993 Australasia.
994 *Australia.*
995 *New Guinea.*
996 Polynesia.
997 Isolated islands.
998 Arctic regions.
999 Antarctic regions.

SUBJECT INDEX.

Find the subject in this Alphabetical INDEX. The number following it is its Class Number. The entire resources of the library on this subject will be found under this number either in the Subject Catalogue, the Shelf Catalogue, or on the shelves.

Where a class number ends in a cipher, the subject will be found, on reference to the prefixed classification, to be subdivided.

Abolition 326
Aborigines North Am. 970
Abortion 618
Abyssinia 963
" language 493
Academies 378
" of science 506
Accounts 657
Acoustics 534
Acrostics 819, 829, 839, etc.
Acts and Resolves 328
Acts of the Apostles 226
Addresses 815, 825, 835, etc.
Administration 350
Administrative law 342
Admiralty Law 346
Adultery 176, 345
Advent, second 236
Aeronautics 533
Æsthetics 701
Æthiopia 966
Afghanistan 958
Africa—botany 586
customs and costumes 396
description 916
ecclesiastical history 276
geography 916
geology 556
history 960
statistics 316
Africa—
travels 916
Agricultural chemistry 631
Agriculture 630
Air 533
Alabama 976
Alaska 977
Albania 949
Albertypes 774
Albigenses 272, 944
Alchemy 540
Alcoholic liquors 178, 615, 663
Ales 663
Algæ 582
Algebra 512
Algeria 965
Aliens 343
Allegories 819, 829, 839, etc.
Almanacs 528
" statistical 313
Alphabets 411, 421, 431, etc.
" ornamental 745–748
Ambassadors 341
Ambrotype 772
America North— 970
botany 587
customs and costumes 397
description 917
ecclesiastical history 277
geography 917
America North—
geology 557
history 970
statistics 317
travels 917
America South— 980
botany 588
customs and costumes 398
description 918
ecclesiastical history 278
geography 918
geology 558
history 980
statistics 318
travels 918
American languages 499
" painting 756
" philosophy 191
" revolution 973
Americanisms 427
Amherst College 378
Amputation 617
Amusements 175, 790
Ana, anagrams 819, 829, 839, etc.
Analysis, chemical 543
" qualitative 544
" quantitative 545
Analytical geometry 516
Anatomy, art 743
" comparative 591

Anatomy, human 611
Ancient architecture 722
" customs, costumes 391
" design 746
" geography 912
" history 930
" philosophies 180
" sculpture 732
Anecdote, Religious 249
Aneurism 617
Angels 235
Anglican church 283
Angling 799
Anglo-Saxon history 942
" language 429
Animal magnetism 134
" kingdom 590
Animals, domestic 636
Animalcula 593
Annuities 333
Anonyms 14
Antarctic regions 999
" " travels 919
Anthropology 130
Anti-Masonry 366
Antinomianism 234
Antiquities, *see* subject or c'ntry.
Aphorisms 819, 829, 839, etc.
Apocalypse 228
Apocrypha 229
Apologetics 239
Apoplexy 616
Apostles 922
Apostolic church 274–276
" succession 262
Apothegms 819, 829, 839, etc.
Apparitions 133
Apples 634
Aquariums 590
Aquatint 766
Aqueducts 628
Arabia, ancient history 939
" modern 953
Arabian language 493
" philosophy 197
Arboriculture 715
Arbors 717
Archæology, prehistoric 571
Archery 799
Architects, lives 927
Architectural drawing 744
Architecture 720
" naval 699
Arctic regions 998
" " travels 919
Argentine republic 982
Arianism 281, 232
Aristotelian philosophy 185
Arithmetic 511
Arizona 977
Arkansas 976
Armenia 956
Armies 355
Arminianism 287, 234
Armor 355
Art anatomy 743
" biography 927
" education 707
" schools 753–756
Artesian wells 628
Articulates, paleontology 565
" zoology 595
Artillery 358
Artists' lives 927
Arts, fine 700
" " biography of 927
" useful 600
" " biography of 926
Ashantee 967
" geography 916
Asia— 950
botany 585
customs and costumes 395
ecclesiastical history 275
geography 915
geology 555
history 950
statistics 315
travels 915
Asia Minor 956
Assassination 345
Assault and battery 345
Assaying 668
Assent 163
Associations 360
" musical 789
Assurance 368
Assyria 935
Assyrian language 493
Asthma 616
Astrology 133
Astronomical maps 524
Astronomical observations 525
Astronomy 520
Atheism 211
Athletic sports 796
Atlases 910
Atmosphere 533
Atonement 234
Aurora 537, 551
Australasia 993
Australia 994
Austria 943
Authority 171
Authors' lives 928
Autobiography, *see* Biography.
Azores 946
Babylon 935
Backgammon 795
Baconian philosophy 192
Ball playing 797
Ballads, *see* Poetry.
Ballooning 533
Banditti 345, 366
Bank Note Engraving 768
Bankrupt laws 343
Banks 332
Baptism 264
Baptists 286
Barbary States 961
Barometer 533, 551
Bas-reliefs 731
Base ball 797
Basque language 499
" provinces 946
Baths 613
Bavaria 943
Beauty 701
Beer 663
Bees 638
Beetles 595
Beets 635
" sugar 664
Belgium 949
Belles-lettres 800
Bell-ringing 785
Bells 671
Bermudas 971
Bible 220
" dictionaries, etc. 220
" in schools 377
" societies 362
Bibliographies 11

Bibliographies— Special countries 15
" forms 12
" subjects 16
Bibliography 10
Billiards 795
Biography 920
Biology 570
Birds 598
" palæontology 568
Births 312
Blacksmithing 682
Bleaching 667
Blindness 616
Block books 22
Blowpipe 543
Blue laws 343
Boating 797
Boats 797, 699
Bokhara 959
Bolivia 984
Bonds and stocks 333
Bones 611
Books 10, 20
Book binding 10, 25, 686
" collecting 10
" keeping 657
" rarities 20
Booksellers' catalogues 17, 18
Boot-making 685, 675
Botany 580
" fossil 561
" medical 615
Brahmanism 294
Brandy 615, 663
Brazil 981
Breviaries 244
Brewing 663
Bricks 673
Bridge-building 624
Brigands 345, 366
British America 971
" Columbia 972
" India 954
" Museum 369
Britons 942, 941
Bronchitis 616
Bronzes 738
Buccaneers 345, 366
Buddhism 294
Buenos Ayres 982
Building 690
Burial 390, 614, 719
Burmah 954
Business ethics 174
" manuals 658
Butter 637
Butterflies 595
Byzantine Empire 949
Cabinet making 684
Calabria 945
Calculators 511
Calculus 517
Caledonia 941
California 977
Calisthenics 613
Caloric 536
Calvinism 234
Cambists 332
Cambria 942
Cameos 736
Canada 972
Canal engineering 626
" transit 386
Canary Isles 946
Cancer 616
Canon law 348
Capital and labor 331
Capital punishment 345
Car-building 699
Card-playing 795
Caribbee Islands 989
Caricatures 741
Carpentry 694
Carriage making 684
Carthage 939
Carving 643
" and chasing 736
Cashmere 954
Castille 946
Casts 730
Casuistry 171
Catalogues—Authors 18
" Books 12–18
" Libraries 12–18
" Subjects 17
Catarrh 616
Catechisms 241
Cathedrals 726
Catholic Church 282
Cattle 636
Caucuses 324
Cavalry 357
Caves 551
Celibacy 136, 176
Celtic language 496
" literature 896
Celts 936
Cements 693
Cemeteries 719
Censuses 310
Central Africa 966
" America 979
Ceramic art 673, 738
Cetacea 599
Ceylon 954
Chaldee language 493
Chances 519
Charades 795
Charitable associations 361
Charts, history 908
Chasing 736
Checkers 795
Cheese 637
Chemical agriculture 631
" analysis 543
" technology 660
Chemicals—manufacture 661
Chemistry 540
Chess 794
Childbirth 618
Chili 983
Chimneys 693
China, ancient 931
" modern 951
Chinese language 491
" literature 891
" religion 299
Chivalry 322
Chloroform 615, 617, 618
Cholera 616
Christ 232
Christian doctrines 230
" fathers 270
" institutions 260
" sects 280
Christianity, evidences 239
" history 270–289
Christmas customs 390
Christology 232
Chromolithography 764
Chronologies 902
Chronology 529

Church 261
" architecture 726
" of England 283
" fathers 270
" history 270–289
" music 783
" polity 262
" of Rome 282
" and state 261, 172, 329
Circassia 947
Circumnavigations 910
Citizenship 342
City transit 388
Civil engineering 620
" law 348
" service organs 351
" " regulations 351
Civilization—progress 313
Clairvoyance 134
Classical education 375
Classics, Greek 488, 880
" Latin 478, 870
Classification 112
Clergy, lives of 922
Climatology 551, 536
Clinics 610
Clock-making 681
Clothes-making 687
Clothing 646
Clubs 369
Coal 549, 644
Coast survey 622
Coats of arms 929
Cochin China 951
Co-education 376
Coffee 641, 633
Coinage 332
Coins 737
Coleoptera 595
Collections, art 708
drawing and design 749
engraving 769
painting 759
photography 779
sculpture 739
Collectors' manuals 579
Colleges 378
Collieries 628
Colombia, S. A. 986
Colonies 325
Color 535
Colors, painting 752
Coloring 667
Comedy, *see* Drama.
Comets 523
Comic works, *see* Humor.
Commemorative sermons 259
Commentaries, Bible 220
" law 340
Commerce 380
Commercial law 343
Common law 343
Common schools 372
Communication 380, 650
Communion 265
Communism 335
Comparative anatomy 591
" mythology 291
" philology 410
Compass 629, 538, 527
Compends—
fine arts 702
history 902
literature 802
natural science 502
philology 402
philosophy 102
science 502
sociology 302
theology 202
useful arts 602
Composition 815
" of music 781
Comte's philosophy 194, 145
Conchology 594
Concordances of Bible 220
Confectionery 642
Confessional 282
Congregationalism 285
Conic sections 515
Connecticut 974
Conscience 170, 233
Conservatories of music 789
Constitution, English 323
" United States 324
Constitutional law 342
Construction, architectural 721
Consuls 327
Consumption 616
Contagion 614
Contracts 343
Convents 362, 271
Conversation 177
Cookery 641
Co-operation 331
Copper 671, 549
Copper engraving 762
Coptic language 492
Copyright 343
Corals 593
Corea 959
Corn laws 347, 343
Cornices 721
Coroners 343
Corporal punishment 371
Corporations 360
Correction, houses of 364
Correlation of forces 530
Correspondence 816
Corsica 944
Cosmetics 646
Cosmogony 113
Cosmology 113
Cossacks 947
Costa Rica 979
Costumes 390
Cottages 728
Cotton manufactures 678
" planting 633
" trade 381, 382
Councils 262, 270
Courts martial 347
Cousin's philosophy 194
Covenanters 274, 941
Cows 636, 637
Cranberries 634
Crayoning 741
Creation 213
Credit 334
Creeds 244, 280
Cremation 614, 390
Crete 949
Cricket 796
Crimea 947
Crimes and punishments 345
Criminal law 345
Critical psychology 142
Criticism—literary, *see* Essays.
Crocheting 793
Croquet 796
Croup 616
Crusades 274, 940
Crustacea 595

Cryptogamia 582
Crystallography 548
Cuba 979
Currency 332
Curvilinear motion 531
Customs and duties 337
" " manners 390
Cyclopædias, general 30
Daguerreotype 772
Dairy 637
Dancing 793
Danish 498
Darwinism 575
Deaf and dumb institutions 361
Deafness 616
Death 612
" and resurrection 236
" penalty 345
Debates 815
Decimal system 511
" weights & measures 389
Decorative art 745–748
Deductive logic 162
Deism 211
Delaware 975
Delusions 133
Democracy 324
Demonology 133
Denmark 948
Denominations, Christian 280
Dentistry 617
Depravity 233, 216
Derangement, mental 132
Descarte's philosophy 194
Descriptive astronomy 523
" geometry 744
Design and drawing 740
" ornamental 745–8
Despotism 321
Detectives 354
Deuteronomy 222
Development theory 575
Devil 235
Devotional theology 240
Dew 551
Dialectics 160
Dialects—
English 427
French 447
German 437
Greek 487
Italian 457
Dialects—
Latin 477
Spanish 467
Diamonds 552
Dictionaries—
comparative 413
English 423
fine art 703
French 443
German 433
Greek 483
history 903
Italian 453
Latin 473
literature 803
natural science 503
philology 403
philosophy 103
science 503
sociology 303
Spanish 463
theology 203
useful arts 603
Didactic theology 241
Die-making 736
Diet 613
Differential calculus 517
Digestion 612
Digests 343
Dining 643
Diphtheria 616
Diplomacy 327, 341
Diplomatics 10, 21
Directories 910
Discipline, education 371
Diseases 616
Disinfection 614
Dispensatories 615
Dissection 611
Dissenters 289, 283
Distillation 663
District of Columbia 976
Divorce 343, 173
Doctrinal history 273
" sermons 253
" theology 230
Dogs 599, 636
Domestic animals 636
" architecture 728
" economy 640
" and for'n relat'ns 327
" medicine 615
Domestic trade 381
" worship 248
Dominos 795
Drainage 631, 614
Drama, general treatises 812
" English 822
" French 842
" German 832
" Greek 882
" Italian 852
" Latin 872
" Spanish 862
Dramatic amusements 792
" music 782
Draughts 795
Drawing 740
Drawing-books 741
Dreams 135
Dress 646
" making 646
Drives 713
Driving 798
Drugs 615
Druids 299
Duelling 177, 345, 392
Dutch language 439
" painting 753
" Reformed Church 289
" Republic 949
Duties 170
" and customs 337
Dyeing 667
Dynamical electricity 537
" geology 553
Dynamics 531
Dysentery 616
Dyspepsia 616
Ear diseases 616
Early Greek philosophy 182
Earth 551
" figure of 526
Earthquakes 553
East Indies 954
Easter 244
Eastern church 281
" States 974
Ecclesiastical history 270
" polity 262
Echinoderms 593
Eclectic medicine 616
" psychology 148
Eclipses 523

Economy, domestic 640
" political 330
Ecuador 989
Education 370
" fine arts 707
" history 907
" natural sciences 507
" philology 407
" philosophy 107
" science 507
" theology 207
" useful arts 607
Educational institutions 378
" reports 379
Egypt, ancient 932
" modern 962
Egyptian language 492
" literature 892
Election sermons 256
Elections 324
Electricity 537
Electro-magnetism 538
Eleemosynary institutions 361
Elementary education 372
Elgin marbles 733
Elocution 815
Emancipation 326
Embalming 390
Embargo 346, 341
Emblems 219
Embryology 576
Emigration 325
Empirical psychology 144
Enamel painting 751
Encaustic " 751
Encyclopædias, general 30
Engineering 620
" instruments 629
England, history 942
English church 283
" dialects 427
" dictionaries 423
" etymology 422
" government 323
" grammar 425
" language 420
" literature 820
" orthography 421
" painting 756
" philology 420
" philosophy 192
" prosody 426
English sculpture 735
" synonyms 424
" texts 428
Engraving 760
Enigmas 819, 829, 839, etc.
Entertainments 791
Enthusiasm 137
Entomology 595
Entozoa 595
Epics 811, 821, 831, etc.
" Greek 883
" Latin 873
Epicurean philosphy 187
Epidemics 614
Epigrams 819, 829, 839, etc.
Episcopal church 283
Epistles, Bible 227
Epistolography 816, 826, etc.
Epitaphs 929
Equador 989
Equestrian exercise 798
Equipments of armies 355
" navies 359
Equity 344
Eschatology 236
Esquimaux 979, 998
Essays, English literature 824
" fine arts 704
" French 844
" general treatises 814
" German 834
" history 904
" Italian 854
" literature 804
" natural science 504
" philology 404
" philosophy 104
" political 329
" science 504
" sociology 304
" Spanish 864
" theology 204
" useful arts 604
Etching 767
Etherization 617
Ethics 170
Ethiopia 966
Ethnography 390
Ethnology 572
Etiquette 177
Etruria 937
Etymologies, comparative 412
Etymologies, English 422
" French 442
" German 432
" Greek 482
" Italian 452
" Latin 472
" Spanish 462
Eucharist 265
Eulogies 920, 259
Europe—botany 584
customs and costumes 394
ecclesiastical history 274
geography 914
geology 554
history 940
statistics 314
travels 914
Evidence (law) 349
Evidences of Christianity 239
Evil 216
Evolution 575
Exchange 332
Excise 336
Exegesis 220
Exhibitions, art 708
Exodus 222
Experimental Chemistry 542
Explorations 910
Expository sermons 258
Express companies 385
Eye, diseases 616
" functions 612
Fables 819, 829, 839, etc.
Facetiae 819, 829, 839, etc.
Fairy tales 813, 823, 833 etc.
Faith 234, 163
Family 173
" medicines 616
" worship 247
Fanaticism 133
Farces 828, 838, etc., 791
Farming 630
Farriery 682
Fashion 177
Fasts 244
Fatalism 159
Fathers of the church 270
Fauna 590
Feasts 244
Federalism 324
Female education 376
" seminaries 378

Fencing 796
Ferns 582
Fetichism 299
Feudal institutions 322
Fevers 616
Fiction, *see* Romance.
Field books, engineering 629
Field sports 796–799
Figure of the earth 526
Filibusters 363, 345, 978
Final causes 113
Finances 330
Fine arts 700
  biography of 927
Finland 947
Finno-Hungarian language 499
Fire arms 355, 683
  " departments 369
  " engines 621
  " insurance 368
  " works 662
Fishes 597
  " palæontology 567
Fisheries 639
Fishing 799
Flags 929
Flanders 949
Flax 633, 677
Flemish painting 753
Flies 595
Flora 584–589
Florence 945
Florida 976
Flower garden 716, 583
Flowers 580
Fluxions 517
Folk-lore 291–293
Food 643
Foreign missions 267
  " relations 327
  " trade 382
Forgery 345
Form book 349
Fortification 623
Fortune-telling 133
Fossils 560
Founderies 671
Foundling hospitals 361
Fountains 714
Fowling 799
Fowls 636
Fractures 617
France 944
Franchise 324
Franciscans 271
Franconia 943
Franco-Prussian war 943, 944
Free-hand drawing 741
Freemasonry 366
Free trade 337
Freewill 159
French language 440
  " " old 449
  " literature 840
  " painting 754
  " philosophy 194
  " revolution 944
  " sculpture 735
Fresco painting 751
Friction 531
Friends, Society of 289
Friendship 157
Fruit culture 634
Fuel 644
Funds and funding 336
Funeral sermons 259
Funerals 390
Furniture 645
Future life 218
Future state 237
Galleries of art 708
  drawing and design 749
  engraving 769
  painting 759
  photography 779
  sculpture, etc. 739
Galvanism 537
Gambling 175
Game laws 345
Games 793–7
Gardening 635
  " Landscape 710
Gas-fitting 696
  " lighting 665, 644
  " making 665
Gastronomy 641
Gauging 389
Gazetteers 910
Gem engraving 736
Gems 549
Genealogy 929
Generation, Spontaneous 577
Genesis 222
Genoa 945
Geodesy 526
Geography 910
  " Africa 916
  " ancient 912
  " Asia 915
  " Europe 914
  " historical 911
  " modern 913
  " N. America 917
  " physical 551
  " S. America 918
  " travels 910
Geology 550
  " dynamical 553
Geometry 513
  " analytical 516
Georgia 959, 976
German language 430
  " " low 439
  " literature 830
  " painting 753
  " philosophy 193
  " Reformed Church 289
Germany 943
Ghosts 133
Gipsies 949
Girondists 363, 944
Glaciers 553
Glass 666
  " painting 751
Glazing 698
Glees 784
Globes, use of 522
Glossaries 413, 423, 433, etc.
Gloves 646, 675, 677
Gnostics 281
God 231
Gold 549, 671
Goniometry 514
Good-Friday 244
Gospels 226
Gothic architecture 723
Goths 943
Gout 616
Government 320
Grace 234
Grafting 634
Grains 633
Grammars, comparative 415
  " English 425
  " French 445
  " German 435

Grammars, Greek 485
" Italian 455
" Latin 475
" Spanish 465
Granada 946
Granges 363
Grape culture 634
Grasses 633
" ornamental 716, 583
Grave-stones 718
" yards 719
Gravitation 531
Great Britain 941, 942
Greece, ancient 938
" modern 949
Greek architecture 722
" church 281
" commentaries 488
" language 480
" literature 880
" modern 489
" mythology 292
" philosophy 180, 888
" sculpture 733
" texts with notes 488
" " without notes 880
" translations 880
Greenhouses 583, 635
Greenland 998
Grounds, private 712
Groves 715
Guatemala 979
Guiana 988
Guide books 910
Guillotine 345
Guinea 967
Gun cotton 355, 662
Gunnery 355
Gunpowder 355, 662
Gunsmithery 683
Gutta percha 679
Gymnastics 613
Gypsies 949
Habeas corpus 343
Hamiltonian philosophy 192
Harbors 627
Harmony, music 781
" of gospels 226
Harness-making 685
Harpsichord 787
Hasheesh 615
Hats 646
Health 613
" public 614
Heart diseases 616
Heat 536
Heathen religions 290
Heating 697
Heaven 237
Hebrew history 933
" language 493
Hedges 715
Hegelian philosophy 193
Heliotypes 774
Hell 237
Heraclitic philosophy 182
Heraldry 929
Herbariums 582
Hermaphrodites 590, 612
Hermeneutics 220
Herpetology 598
Hieroglyphics 419
Higher education 373
Highwaymen 345
Histology 611
Historical books of Bible 222
" charts and tables 908
" geography 911
" societies 906
History— 900
ancient 930–939
biography of 928
ecclesiastical 270
fine arts 709
geography 910
in Greek 889
in Latin 879
literature 809
modern 940–999
natural sciences 509
philology 409
philosophy 109
philosophy of 901
science 509
sociology 309
theology 209
universal 909
useful arts 609
Histrionics 792
Holy Land 933, 956
Home education 371, 374
" missions 266
Homicide 345
Homiletics 251
Homœopathy 615
Homologies 574
Honey 638
Horse 636, 599, 357, 619
Horse-racing 798
" riding 798
" shoeing 682
Horsemanship 798
Hortatory theology 243
Horticulture 635
Hospitals 361
Hotels 390
Hothouses 583, 635
House-keeping 640
Housewifery 640
Huguenots 289, 944
Human anatomy 611
Humane societies 361
Humor 818
English 828
French 848
German 838
Greek 887
Italian 858
Spanish 868
Hunting 799
Hurricanes 533
Husbandry 630
Hybridism 590
Hydraulic engineering 628
Hydraulics 532
Hydrodynamics 532
Hydrography 551, 627, 527
Hydromechanics 532
Hydropathy 615
Hydrophobia 614, 616
Hydrostatics 532
Hygiene 613
" mental 131
Hymnology 245
Hypochondria 132, 616
Icebergs 553
Iceland 948
Icelandic language 498
Ichnology 560
Ichthyology 597
Iconography 730
Idealistic psychology 141
Idiocy 132
Idolatry 290
Illumination 745
Imagination 156

Immersion 264, 286
Immigration 325
Immortality 218, 237
Imprisonment for debt 345
Incarnation 232
Income 333
Incunabula 23
India, ancient history 934
" modern " 954
Indian language 494
" literature 894
Indiana 977
Indians, American 970
" " language 499
India-rubber 675
Indoor amusements 793
Induction 161
Inductive logic 161
Industrial drawing 744
" schools 607
Inebriate institutions 364
Infanticide 173, 345
Infantry 356
Infidelity 211
Inoculation 614, 615
Inorganic chemistry 546
Inquisition 272
Insane Hospitals 361
Insanity 132
Inscriptions 417
Insects 595
Inspiration 238
Instincts 158
Institute of France 64
Institutions 360
" educational 378
" Feudal 322
" Monarchic 323
" Musical 789
" of religion 260
" Patriarchal 321
" Republican 324
Instruction 371
Instrumental music 785
Instruments, engineering 629
" making 681
Insurance companies 368
Integral calculus 517
Intellect 151
Intellectual philosophy 140–150
Intemperance 178
Intercommunication 380, 650
Interest 334
" tables 658
Interior, administration 353
Intermarriage 136, 618
Intermediate state 237
Interments 614, 390
International exhibitions 600
" law 341
Intolerance 272
Intuitive psychology 143
Inventions 608
Invertebrates 592
" paleontology 562
Ionian Islands 949
Ionic philosophy 182
Iowa 977
Iranian languages 495
" literature 895
Ireland 941
Irish church 283
" language 496
Iron, bridges 624
" manufacture 672
" mineral 549, 669
Iron-clad ships 359, 699
Irrigation 631
Italian language 450
" literature 850
" painting 755
" philosophy 195
" sculpture 734, 735
Italy 945
Jacobins 363, 944
Jamaica 979
Jansenism 282
Japan 952
Japanese language 499
Japanning 698
Java 992
Jests 819, 829, 839, etc.
Jesuit missions 266, 282
Jesuits 271, 282
Jesus 232
Jewelry 646, 671
Jews, history 933
John 226
Joinery 694
Journalism 50
Judaism 296
Judgment and future state 237
Junius letters 329
Jurisprudence 340
Jury 342
Justification 234
Kafirs 968
Kaleidoscope 536
Kansas 977
Kant's philosophy 193, 142
Keltic, ancient history 936
" language 496
" literature 896
Kentucky 976
Kindergarten 372
Kinematics 531
Kitchen 641
Knighthood 322
Koran 297
Labor 331
Laboring classes 331
Labrador 972
Lace-making 677
Lakes, artificial 714
Land surveying 622
Landlord and tenant 333
Landscape gardening 710
" painting 758
" photographs 778
Language 400
Lapland 947, 948
Latin commentaries 488
" language 470
" literary history 470
" literature 870
" medieval 479
" texts, with notes 488
" " without notes 870
" translations 870
Laundry 648
Law 340
" of nations 341
Lawns 712
Lawyers' lives 923
Lead 549, 671
Leather 675
Lectures 815, 825, 835, etc.
Legends 291–293
Legerdemain 133
Legislation 343, 328
Legislative annals 328
Legitimacy 343
Lent 244
Lepidoptera 595
Letter writing 816
Letters 816

Letters—
English 826
French 846
German 836
Greek 886
Italian 856
Latin 876
Spanish 866
Levant 956, 962
Levelling 622
Leviticus 222
Lexicons 413, 423, 433, etc.
Libel 345
Liberty 324
" of press 324
Libraries 19
Library catalogues 17, 18
" economy 19
" history and reports 19
Lichens 582
Life, future 218, 237
Life insurance 368
Light 535
Light-houses 656, 627
Lightning 537
Lights and fuel 644
Line engraving 765
Linguistics 400
Liquors 663
Litany 244
Literary criticism 824, 834, 844, etc.
miscellany 819
English 829
French 849
German 839
Italian 859
Spanish 869
property 343
Literature 800
" biography of 928
" classical 870, 880, 488–498
" treatises 810
Lithography 763
Lithology 552
Liturgies 444
Locke 192, 145
Locks and keys 683
Locomotives 621
Logarithms 514
" tables 514
Logic 160
Longevity 312
Lord's Supper 265
Lorraine 943, 944
Lotteries 175
Louisiana 976
Low countries 949
" Dutch 439
Luke 226
Lunacy 132
Lunatic asylums 361
Lung diseases 616
Lutherans 289
Lyric poetry 811, 821, 831, etc.
" " Greek 884
" " Latin 874
Macaronics 819, 829, etc.
Machine engraving 768
Machinery 621
Madagascar 969
Madness 132
Magazines 50, 105, 205, etc.
Magic 133
Magnetism 538
" animal 134
Magyars 943
Mahometanism 297
Mails 383
Maine 974
Malaria 614
Malayan language 499
Malaysia 991
Malt 663
Malta 949
Mamelukes 962
Mammalia 599
" palæontology 569
Man, doctrine of 233
" ethnography 390
" natural history of 573
Maniacs 132
Manners and customs 390
Manuals, collectors' 579
Manufactures 670
Manures 631
Manuscripts 13, 21
Maps 910
" astronomical 524
Marble manufacture 673
Marbles 731
Marine architecture 699
" insurance 368
" law 346
Marriage, customs 390
" ethics 173
Maritime law 346
Mark 226
Martial law 347
Martyrs 272
Maryland 976
Mason & Dixon's line 326
Masonry 693
Masonry, Free 366
Massachusetts 974
Materia medica 615
Materialist 146
Materials, building 691
Maternity 136, 618
Mathematical drawing 744
" instruments 629
" tables 514
Mathematics 510
Matthew 226
Mausoleums 718
Maxims 819, 829, 839, etc.
Measles 616
Measures and weights 389
Mechanical drawing 744
" engineering 621
" trades 680
Mechanics 531
Mechanics' associations 606
Medals 737
Mediæval architecture 723
" customs, costumes 392
" design 747
" history *with modern*
" Latin 479
" sculpture 734
Medical botany 615
" jurisprudence 343
Medicine 610
" veterinary 619
Meditations, theology 242
Melodeons 786
Melody 781
Memoirs 920
Memory 154
Mensuration 612
Mental derangement 132
" faculties 150
" hygiene 131
" philosophy 140–150
" physiology 131
Mesmerism 134

Messiah 232
Metal manufactures 671
Metallurgy 669
Metaphysics 110
Meteorology 551
Methodism 287
Methodology 112
Methods of education 371
Metric system 389
Metrology 389
Mexican war 973, 978
Mexico 978
Mezzotint 776
Michigan 977
Microscopy 578
Middle ages, history, *see* special countries.
Middle States 975
Midwifery 618
Military and naval arts 355–359
  engineering 623
  law 347
  science 355
Militia 355
Milk 637
Millennium 236
Millinery 646
Mills, cot., woolen, etc. 677, 678
  paper 676
Mill-work 621
Mind 150
Mineral waters 615
Mineralogy 549
Mines, mining, engineering 628
Miniatures 757
Ministers 250
  " lives 922
Minnesota 977
Minstrelsy 811, 821, 831, etc.
Miracles 231
Miscellany, literary 819
  English 829
  French 849
  German 839
  Italian 859
  Spanish 869
Missions 266
  " foreign 267
Mississippi 976
Missouri 977
Mnemonics 154
Modeling 731
Modern architecture 724
  " costumes, customs 393–399
  " designs 748
  " geography 913–919
  " Greek 489
  " history 940–999
  " philosophy 190
  " sculpture 735
Mohammedanism 297
Molecular physics 539
Mollusca 594
  paleontology 564
Monarchic institutions 323
Monasteries 271
Monastic orders 271
Money 332
Mongolian language 499
Monitors, iron-clads 359, 699
Monograms 745–748
Monopolies 331
Montana 977
Monuments 718
Moon 523
Moral philosophy 170
Moravians 289
Moravian missions 266
Morea 949
Mortar 693
Mortality 312
Mortgages 343
Mormonism 298
Morocco 964
Morphology 581
Mosaic painting 751
Moslems 297
Mosquitia 979
Mosses 582
Mothers 173
Moths 595, 646
Mouldings 721
Municipal government 342
Mutual aid societies 361
Music 780
Musical composition 781
Musicians 927
Mysteries 133
Mysticism 289
Mythology, comparative 291
  " Greek & Roman 292
Mythology, Norse 293
Names 929
Narcotics 615
National costumes 390
  " customs 390
Natural history 550–590
  " philosophy 530
  " science 500
  " selection 575
  " theology 210
Naturalization 343, 325
Nature 500
Naval architecture 699
Naval science 359
Navies 359
Navigation 527, 656
  " laws 346
Nebraska 977
Necromancers 133
Needle-work 646, 793
Negroes 573, 326
Nepotism 323
Nestorians 281
Netherlands 949
Neuroptera 595
Neutrals 341
Nevada 977
New Brunswick 972
  " England 974
  " Granada 986
  " Guinea 995
  " Hampshire 974
  " Jersey 975
  " Mexico 977
  " Platonists, philosophy 186
  " Testament 225
  " York 975
Newfoundland 971
Newspapers 50
Nicaragua 979
Nobility 322
Non-Christian religions 290
Normal schools 371
Norman conquest 942–946
Normandy 944
Norse 498
North Africa 961
  " America 970
  " America botany 578
  " customs & costumes 397
  " ecclesiastical hist'y 277

North America, geography 917
" geology 557
" history 970
" statistics 317
" travels 917
North Carolina 976
Northmen 948
Norway 948
Nosology 616
Nova Scotia 972
Novels 813
English 823
French 843
German 833
Italian 853
Spanish 863
Nubia 962
Numbers, book of 222
Numismatics 374
Nunneries 362
Nursery 649
Object teaching 371
Observations, astronomical 525
Obstetrics 618
Ocean transportation 387, 656
Oceanica 990
botany 589
customs and costumes 399
ecclesiastical history 279
geography 919
geology 559
history 990
statistics 319
travels 919
Odd Fellows 366
Odontology 611, 617
Ohio 977
Old French 449
Old Testament 221
Oil manufacture 664
" painting 751
Ontology 111
Operas 782
Opium 615
Optics 535
Oracles 133
Oratorios 783
Oratory 815
English 825
French 845
German 835
Greek 885
Oratory—
Italian 855
Latin 875
political 329
sacred 251
Spanish 865
Orchards 634
Orders of architecture 722–724
Ordination sermons 257
Ordnance 355, 683
Oregon 977
Organ 786
Organic chemistry 547
" remains 562
Oriental architecture 722
" church 281
" languages 490
" philosophy 181
Origin of language 400
Ornamental botany 583
" design 745
" work 745
Ornithology 598
Orphans 361
Orthoepy 411, 421, 431, etc.
Orthography, comparative 411
English 421
French 441
German 431
Greek 481
Italian 451
Latin 471
Spanish 461
Ottoman empire 949, 956
Out-door sports 796–799
Oxford University 378
Oysters 594, 641
Paganism 290
Painters' lives 927
Painting 750, 698
Palæontology 560
Palestine 956
Pantheism 212
Pantheistic psychology 147
Papacy 282
Paper-hanging 698
Paper manufacture 676
Paper money 332
Papua 995
Paraguay 989
Parchment 10
Parent and child 173
Parish law 343
Parks, public 711
Parliament 324
Parliamentary law 348
Parrots 598
Parseeism 295
Partnership 343
Parturition 618
Passions 157
Pastoral theology 250
Patagonia 989
Patents 608
Pathology 616
Patriarchal institutions 321
Patriotism 172
Patristic philosophy 189
Patronage 177
Pauperism 339
Pawnbroking 334
Peace and war 172
Pears 634
Peat 644
Pedobaptism 264
Peerage 322
Peloponnesus 938, 949
Penal law 345
Penance 244
Peninsular war 946
Penitentiaries 365
Penmanship 652
Pennsylvania 975
Pentateuch 222
Perception 152
Perfectionists 289
Perfumery 660, 646
Periodicals, *see* special subjects.
fine arts 705
general 50
history 905
literature 805
natural science 505
philology 405
philosophy 105
science 505
sociology 305
theology 205
useful arts 605
Perpetual motion 531
Persecutions 272
Persia, ancient history 935
" modern " 955
Persian language 495

Personal liberty 342
" property 342
" rights 342
Perspective 742
Peru 985
Pests, agricultural 632
Petrifaction 560
Petroleum 549, 665
Pharmacopœias 615
Pharmacy 615
Phi Beta Kappa 366
Philology 400
biography of 924
Philosophy 100
" ancient 180
biography of 921
Greek 180, 888
Latin 878
mental 150
modern 190
moral 170
natural 530
of art 701
history 901
language 401
literature 801
science 501
sociology 301
religion 201
useful arts 601
Phœnicia 939
Phœnician language 493
Phonetic short-hand 653
" spelling 421
Phonography 653
Phonology 414
Photographic chemistry 771
Photographs 773
Photography 770
Photo-lithography 775
Phrase-books, *see* Language.
Phrenology 139
Phthisis 616
Physical education 613
" geography 551
Physics 530
" molecular 539
Physiognomy 138
Physiography 551
Physiology 612
" comparative 591
Physiology, mental 131
" vegetable 581
Piano-forte 786
Picture galleries 759
Piedmont 945
Pig 636
Piracy 345
Pisciculture 639
Plague 616, 614
Planets 523
Plans for building 692
Plants 580
landscape gardening 716
paleontology 561
Platonic philosophy 184
Platonists, new 186
Playing cards 795
Plays, *see* Drama 812, 792
Pleading 349
Plumbing 696
Plurality of worlds 521
Pneumatics 533
Pneumatology 150
Poetical books of Bible 223
Poetry 811
English 821
French 841
German 831
Greek 881
Italian 851
Latin 871
Spanish 861
Poets, lives 928
Poisons 615
Poland 949
Polar Regions, geography 919
Polar seas 998, 999
Police 354
Polish language 497
Politeness 177
Political associations 363
" economy 330
" essays 329
" institutions 363
" science 320
" sermons 256
" speeches 329
Polity, ecclesiastical 262
Polygamy 173, 345
Polygraphy 40
Polynesia, botany 589
customs and costumes 399
ecclesiastical history 279
Polynesia—
geography 919
geology 559
history 996
languages 499
statistics 319
travels 919
Polyps 593
Polytheism 290
Pomology 634
Ponds, artificial 714
Poor 339
" laws 343
Popery 282
Population 312
Porcelain 738
Portrait painting 757
Portraits, photographs 777
Portugal 946
Portuguese language 469
" literature 860
Positivism 146
Postage-stamps 383
Post-offices 383
Potato 63
Pottery 73
" manufacture 673
Poultry 636
Powder 662, 355
Practical astronomy 522
" theology 240
" sermons 25
Practice of medicine 615
Prayer 217
Prayer-meetings 247
Preaching and preachers 250
Precedents 343
Precious metals 549
Predestination 231
Pregnancy 618
Pre-historic archæology 571
Presbyterians 284
Prescriptions 615
Press, liberty of 324
Primeval man 571
Primitive Christianity 270
Primogeniture 322
Printing 655
Prints 769
Prison associations 365
Prisons 365
Private grounds 712

Private worship 248
Privateers 341
Probabilities 519
Production 338
Productions of the soil 633
Progress of civilization 312
" of population 313
Prohibited books 28
Prohibition 178
Projectiles 358, 531
Projection 744
Promissory notes 343
Pronunciation, 411, 421, 431, etc.
Property 331
Property law 342, 343
" tax 336
Prophecy 231
Prophetical books of Bible 224
Prose composition, Greek 485
" " Latin 475
Prosody, comparative 416
English 426
French 446
German 436
Greek 486
Italian 456
Latin 476
Spanish 466
Prostitution 618, 176
Protection 337
Protestant episcopal 283
Protestantism 283–289
" and Romanism 282
Protoplasm 576
Protozoa 593
paleontology 563
Provençal language 449
Proverbs, and quotations 819
" Bible 223
Providence 214
Provincialisms 427, 437, etc.
Pruning 634, 715
Prussia 943
Psalms 223
Pseudonyms 14
Psychology 140
Public accounts 336
" buildings 725
" charities 361
" documents 328
" education 370
" funds 336
Public health 614
" houses 390
" lands 353
" meetings 360
" schools 378
" speaking 815
" worship 246
Pulpit oratory 250
Pumps 532
Punctuation, English 421
Punishment 345
Puritans 277, 289
Puseyism 244, 283
Pygmies 599
Pyramids 916, 932
Pyrites 549
Pyrotechnics 662
Pyrrhonism 186
Pythagorean philosophy 182
Quadrumana 599
Quadrupeds 599
Quakers 289
Qualitative analysis 544
Quantitative " 545
Quarantine 614
Quaternions 518
Quotations 819, 829, etc.
Race-horse 798
Races, history 572
Racing 798
Radiates 593
" paleontology 563
Railroad engineering 625
" locomotives 621
Railroads 385
Railways, laws of 343
Rain 551
Rank 322
Rationalism 211, 155
Readers 418, 428, 438, etc.
Reading, art of 815
Reading courses 15, 16
" for self-education 374
Real estate law 343
Reason 155
Rebellion, Southern 973
Recipe books 640
Recreation 790
Reformation 274
Reformatory associations 364
" institutions 364
Reformed church 289
Regeneration 234
Regimen 613
Regulations of armies 355
" of navies 359
Religion and science 215
" sermons 255
Religions, Non-Christian 290
Religious anecdotes 249
" associations 362
" biography 922
" education 377
" fiction 249
" institutions 362
" orders 271
Religious philosophy 201
Remains 560
Rents 333
Repentance 234, 241
Reptiles 598
" paleontology 568
Republican institutions 324
Resistance of materials 691
Resurrection 236
Retribution 237
Revealed religion 231
Revelation 231
Revenue 336
Reviews, *see* Periodicals.
Revivals 269
Revolution, American 973
" French 944
Rhetoric 815
" sacred 251
Rhode Island 974
Rhododendon 582
Riddles 819, 829, etc.
Riding 798
Right of search 341
Rights and liberties 342
Riots 343
Ritualism 244
River transportation 387
Rivers 551
Roads 625
Rocky mountains 557, 917
Rodentia 599
Roman antiquities 937
" architecture 722
" Catholics 282
" history, ancient 937
" " modern 945
" literature 870

Roman law 348
" mythology 292
" sculpture 733
Romance 813
English 823
French 843
German 833
Italian 853
Religious 249
Spanish 863
Romanic languages 440–469
Romansh language 459
Rome, ancient 937
" modern 945
Romish church 282
Rope-making 677
Rowing 797
Rubber manufactures 675
Ruminants 599
Rural architecture 728
Rural sports 796
Russia 947
Russian America 977
" language 497
Sabbatarians 289
Sabbath 263
" reform 263
" schools 268
Sacrament of baptism 264
" Lord's Supper 265
Sacred biography 922
" rhetoric 251
Sacrifices 221
Saddlery 685
Sailors 387
St. Domingo 979
Sale catalogues of books 17,18
Salt manufacture 664
Salvation 234
Sandwich Islands 997
Sanitary commissions 364
" " U. S. 361
" measures 614
Sanskrit language 494
Sardinia 945
Satan 235
Satire 817
English 827
French 847
German 837
Italian 857
Latin 877
Satire— 867
Spanish 332
Savings banks 429
Saxon language 943
Saxons 948
Scandinavia 498
Scandinavian language 898
" literature 211
Scepticism 198
Scholastic philosophy 378
Schools 268
" Sunday 727
School architecture 727
" houses 707
Schools of art 753–756
" painting 193
Schopenhauer's philosophy 943
Schleswig-Holstein 500
Science, Natural 925
" biography of 506
Scientific societies 508
" travels 941
Scotland 496
Scotch language 192
" philosophy 220
Scriptures 616
Scrofulous diseases 730
Sculpture 927
Sculptors' lives 656, 527
Seamanship 342
Secession 236
Second advent 133
" sight 366
Secret societies 280
Sects, Christian 377
Secular education 374
Self-culture 374
" education 493
Semitic languages 893
" literature 152
Sensation 145
Sensational psychology 152
Sense 718
Sepulchres 614
Sepulture 252–259
Sermons 598
Serpents 647
Servants 949
Servia 614
Sewerage 687
Sewing 687
Sewing machine
Sex in education 376
Sexual ethics 176
Sexual science 618
Sexes 136
Shades and shadows 744
Shakers 289
Shakesperiana 822
Sheep 636
Shells 594
" fossil 564
Shemitic languages 493
Ship-building 699
" canals 626, 387
Shipping laws 346
Shoemaking 685, 675
Shooting 799
Short-hand 653
Shrubbery 716
Siam 959
Siberia 957
Sicily 945
Sick-room 649
Sieges 355, 623
Sight 536
" hygiene 613
Signals 654
Sign painting 698
Silk culture 638
" manufacture 677
" worm 638, 595
Silver metal 549
" mines 628
" money 332
Sin 233
Singing 784
Sisters of Mercy 362
Skating 796
Skepticism 211
Skin diseases 616
Skye 941
Slander 177, 345
Slang 427, 437, etc.
Slating 695
Slavery 326
Slavic language 497
" literature 897
Sleep 135
" walking 135
Small-pox 616, 614
Soap-making 664
Social ethics 177
Social science 300

Social worship 247
Socialisms 335
Societies, fine arts 706
" general 60
" history 906
" literature 806
" natural science 506
" philology 406
" philosophy 106
" science 506
" secret 366
" sociology 306
" theology 206
" useful arts 606
Society 177
Sociology 300
" biography of 923
Socratic philosophy 183
Soils 631
Solar system 523
Soldiers 355
Somnambulism 135
Songs 784
Sonnets 811, 821, etc.
Sophist philosophy 183
Sorcery 133
Soul 233
Sound 534
South Africa 968
botany 586
geography 916
South America 980
botany 588
customs and costumes 398
ecclesiastical history 278
geography 918
geology 558
history 980
statistics 318
travels 918
South Carolina 976
" seas 999
Southern States 976
Spain 946
Spanish language 460
" literature 860
" philosophy 196
Specie payment 332
Specifications for building 692
Specters 133
Spectroscope 535
Spectrum analysis 544
Speeches, *see* Oratory.
Spherical astronomy 521
" geometry 513
" trigonometry 514
Spiders 595
Spinoza's philosophy 147
Spiritualism 133
Spontaneous generation 577
Sports 796
Stables 636
Stage 792
Stained glass 745
Stammering 616
Stamps 383
Standing army 355
Starch manufacture 664
Stars 523
State 320
" ethics 172
" papers 328
" rights 342
" trials 345
Statesmen, lives 923
Statics 531
Statistical methods 311
Statistics 310
Statuary 730
Statute law 343
Steam-engine 621
" fitting 696
" navigation 527, 656
" transportation 385, 656
Steel 669
" engraving 762
Stenography 653
Stereotyping 655
Sterescopes and views 776
Stethoscope 616
Stipple engraving 765
Stock, live 636
Stocks 333
Stoic philosophy 188
Stoneware 673
Storms 551
Stills 663
Strategy 355
Strawberries 634
Stringed instruments 787
Study, methods of 371
Stuttering 616
Sublime and beautiful 701
Submarine telegraph 384
Succession 323
Suffrage 324
Sugar-cane 633
Sugar manufacture 664
" planting 633
Suicide 131
Sumatra 992
Summer-houses 717
Sun 523
Sunda 992
Sunday-schools 268
Supernaturalism 133
Superstition 133
Surgery 617
Surnames 929
Surveying 622
Susceptibility 157
Sweden 948
Swedenborgians 289
Swimming 796
Swine 636
Switzerland 949
Syllogism 160
Symbolism 219
Synonyms, English 424
" French 444
" German 434
" Greek 484
" Italian 454
" Latin 474
" Spanish 464
Syphilis 616
Syria 956
Syriac language 493
Syro-Chaldaic 493
Systematic botany 582
Tableaux 791
Tables, dining 643
Tables, mathematical 514
Tachygraphy 653
Tactics 355
Tailoring 687
Takigrafy 653
Tales, *see* Romance.
Talmud 296
Tanning 675
Tariffs 337
Tartary 951, 959
Taste and criticism 701
Taxation 336
Taxidermy 579
Tea cultivation 633

Teachers and teaching 371
Technology, chemical 660
Teeth 611, 617
Tehuantepec 978
Telegraph 384
Telegraphy 654
Telescope 535, 522
Temperaments 137
Temperance 178
Temperature 551, 536
Templars 366
Tennessee 976
Testacea 594
Testament, New 225
" Old 221
Testamentary law 349
Testimony 349
Texas 976
Textile fabrics 677
Texts, comparative 418
" English 428
" French 448
" German 438
" Greek, with notes 488
" " without notes 880
" Italian 458
" Latin, with notes 478
" " without notes 870
" Spanish 468
Thanksgiving 244
Theater, *see* Drama.
" ethics 175
Theaters 792
Theatricals 792
Theft 345
Theism 211
Theodicy 231, 214
Theological doctrine 230
" essays 204
Theology 200
" biography of 922
" devotional 240
" natural 210
" practical 240
Theoretical astronomy 521
" chemistry 541
" ethics 171
Therapeutics 615
Thibet 951
Thirty-nine articles 283
Thomsonianism 615
Thought 153
Throat diseases 616
Thunder 537
Tides 521
Tiling 695
Timber 691
Tin manufacture 671
" mineral 549
Tithes 336
Tobacco 615, 178, 633
Toilet 646
Tolls 336
Tombs 718
Topographical engineering 622
Topography 910
Total abstinence 178
Toxicology 615
Tractarianism 244, 283
Tract society 362
Trade 380
Trade marks 608
Trades, mechanic 680
" unions 367, 606, 331
Tragedies, *see* Drama.
Transactions 106, 206, 306, etc.
Transcendentalism 142
Translation, Greek authors 880
" Latin authors 870
Transportation 380, 656, 345
Transubstantiation 282
Transylvania 943
Trapping 639
Travels 910
" scientific 508
Treason 345
Treasury 352
Trees 580
Trees, ornamental 715
Trespass 345
Trials 340
Trigonometry 514
Trilobites 565
Trinity 232
Troubadours 449, 841
Trunk-making 685
Trusts and trustees 344
Tungusic language 499
Tunnels 625
Turkey 949
" in Asia 956
Turkish baths 613
" language 499
Turning 674
Tuscany 945
Type founding 671
Typography 655
Tyrol 943
Understanding 153
Uniforms 355
Unitarians 288
United States 324, 973
botany 587
customs and costumes 397
ecclesiastical history 277
geography 917
geology 557
history 973
statistics 317
travels 917
Universal History 909
" language 408
Universalism 288
Universities 378
University education 373
Upholstering 645
Uruguay 989
Useful arts 600
biography of 926
Usury 334
Utah 977
Vases 738
Vaudois 272, 949
Vegetable physiology 581
" practice 615
Vegetables 635
Vegetarianism 613
Venereal diseases 616
Venezuela 987
Venice 945
Ventilation 697
Ventriloquism 133
Vermont 974
Versification 811
Vertebrates 596
" paleontology 566
Veterinary medicine 619
Villas 728
Violin 787
Virginia 976
Virtue 170
Vision 535
Visions and dreams 135
Vital principle 576, 612
Vocal culture 784, 815
" music 784

Voice 784
Volcanoes 553
Voyages 910
Wages 331
Wakefulness 135
Waldenses 272, 945
Wales 942
Walks 713
Wallachian language 459
War ethics 172
" science 355–359
Warehouses 380
Warming 697
Washing 648
Washington territory 977
Watch-making 681
Water, artificial ponds, etc. 714
" colors 751
" cure 615
" wheels 531, 621
" works 628
Watering-places 613
Wax flowers 745
Wealth 331
Weather 551
Weaving 677
Weights and measures 389
Welsh language 496
West Indies 979
" Virginia 976
Western States 977
Whale 599
Whale fisheries 639
Wheat 633
Whigs 324
" English 323
Whist 795
Will 159
Wills 343
Wind instruments 788
Wine 663
Wisconsin 977
Wit 819, 829, 839, etc.
Witchcraft 133
Woman, education 376
" suffrage 324
Wood engraving 761
" manufactures 674
Wool 636
Wool manufactures 677
Working classes 331
Worship 246–248
Writing 651
" short-hand 653
Xylography 655
Yachting 797
Year books 313
Yellow fever 616
Young men's association 362
Zend 295
Zend Avesta 295
Zodiac 521
Zoölogy 590
Zoöphytes 593
Zoroaster 295

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